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ABSTRACT

Black workers have been moving up the occupational scale in recent years, away from the labor and service occupations and toward white-collar, craftsmen, and operative jobs. In 1960, two in every five black workers were in white-collar, craftsmen, or operative occupations. By 1970, more than half were in such jobs. These occupations are less subject to unemployment and they are better paid. The change in the occupational distribution of black workers has had the effect of reducing their unemployment rate by three tenths of a percentage point and increasing earnings more than ten dollars a week. The charts presented in this document separate the black labor force into three occupational groups for analysis: The highest paid occupations, which include professional, technical, and managerial workers, whose usual earnings (median) for black men working full time were over 150 dollars a week in 1970; the middle pay levels, including clerical and sales workers, craftsmen and foremen whose usual earnings (median of black men working full time) were 100 to 150 dollars a week; and the lower paid occupations whose usual earnings (median of black men working full time) were 100 dollars a week or less. The charts suggest that lack of education has often been a barrier to employment in the higher paid occupations, whether required for performance of a job or not. (Author/JM)

ED 072167

BLACK AMERICANS

A DECADE OF OCCUPATIONAL CHANGE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
James D. Hodgson, Secretary

Bureau of Labor Statistics
Geoffrey H. Moore, Commissioner

Bulletin 1760

Revised 1972

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PREFACE

This chartbook was prepared by Sylvia Small in the Office of Economic and Social Research, Bureau of Labor Statistics, under the general direction of Robert L. Stein. It grew out of an occupational analysis presented in a paper by Paul Ryscavage.

Maxine Stewart, Program Planning Officer of the Bureau, provided expert guidance.

Marian Hester was responsible for the statistical compilations underlying the charts and Susie Scandrett also contributed.

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INTRODUCTION

Black workers have been moving up the occupational scale in recent years, away from the labor and service occupations and toward white-collar, craftsmen, and operative jobs. In 1960, 2 in every 5 black workers were in white-collar, craftsmen, or operative occupations. By 1970, more than half were in such jobs. These occupations are less subject to unemployment and they are better paid. The change in the occupational distribution of black workers has had the effect of reducing their unemployment rate by three-tenths of a percentage point and increasing earnings more than $10 a week.

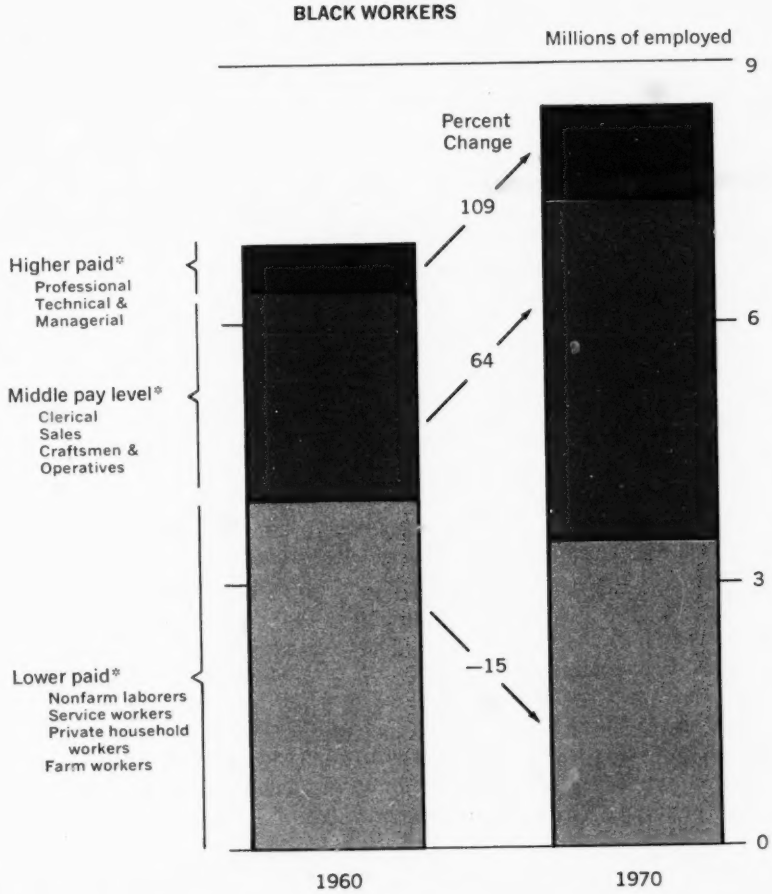
The charts that follow separate the black labor force* into three occupational groups for analysis: The highest paid occupations, which include professional, technical, and managerial workers, whose usual earnings (median) for black men working full time were over $150 a week in 1970; the middle pay levels, including clerical and sales workers, craftsmen and foremen whose usual earnings (median of black men working full time) were $100-$150 a week; and the lower paid occupations whose usual earnings (median of black men working full time) were $100 a week or less. The charts show that black workers in the lowest occupational pay groupings tend to have the lowest educational attainment, and that as one proceeds up the occupational hierarchy education also increases. Lack of education has often been a barrier to employment in the higher paid occupations, whether required for performance of a job or not. Since educational attainment is much greater for young black workers than for older age groups, and since the trend toward increasing education continues, prospects are encouraging for continued occupational advancement.

*Data for black workers shown in this report refer to the Negro population exclusively in chart 5a, 5b, 7a, and 8b. All other charts are based on data for Negro and other nonwhite races, 90 percent of whom are Negroes, according to the 1970 Census of Population.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR OCCUPATIONAL ADVANCEMENT OF BLACK WORKERS HAVE BEEN IMPROVING . . .

BETWEEN 1960 AND 1970, THE NUMBER OF BLACK WORKERS IN HIGHER-PAID AND MIDDLE LEVEL OCCUPATIONS* INCREASED SHARPLY . . .

Chart 1a.
BLACK WORKERS

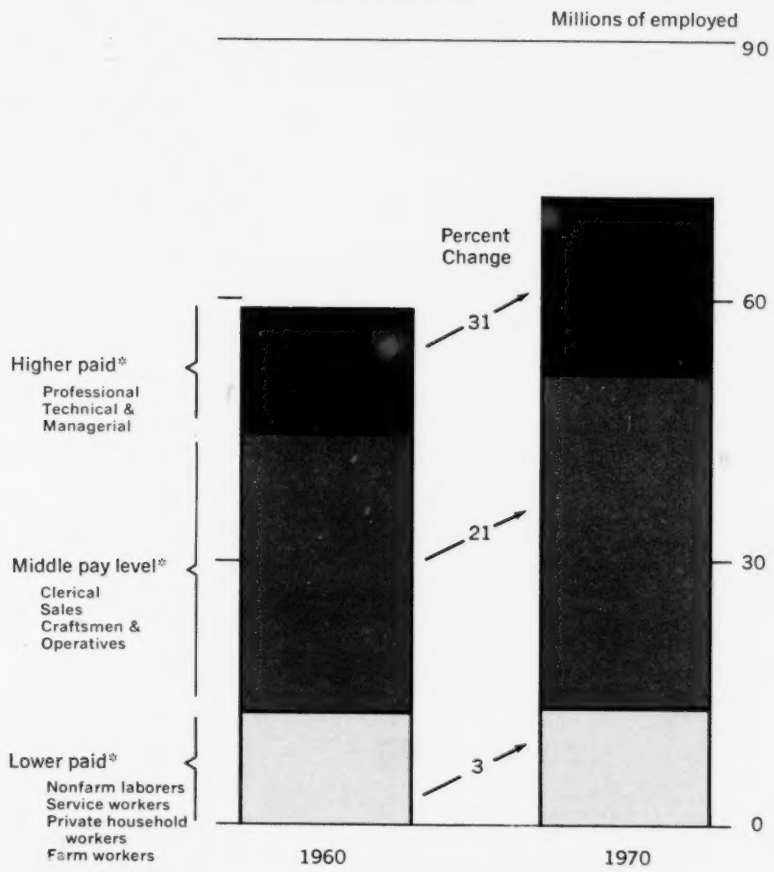


. . . while the number of black workers in lower-paid occupations decreased.

*See Introduction, page 1, for occupational pay level definitions.

GAINS OF WHITE WORKERS WERE SMALLER, PROPORTIONATELY . . .

Chart 1b.
WHITE WORKERS

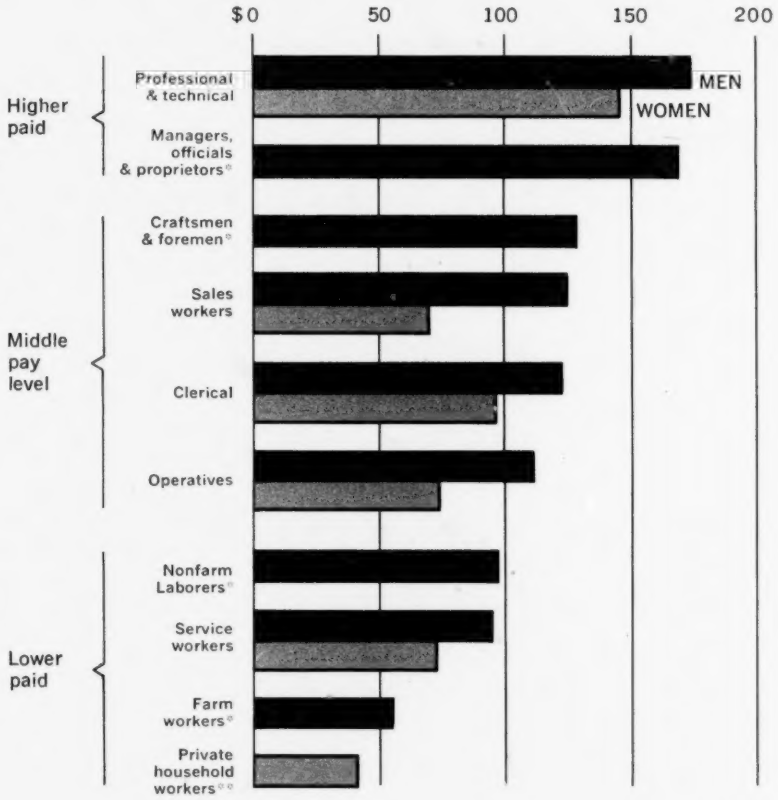


. . . but the share and number of white workers employed in the higher- paid occupations continued to be much larger than for black workers.

THE HIGHER-PAID OCCUPATIONS TEND TO BE MORE SECURE . . .

BLACK MEN IN THE PROFESSIONAL, TECHNICAL, AND MANAGERIAL OCCUPATIONS EARNED ABOUT $75 A WEEK MORE THAN LABORERS AND SERVICE WORKERS . . .

Chart 2a.
USUAL WEEKLY EARNINGS, MAY 1970
(MEDIAN FOR FULL TIME WORKERS)

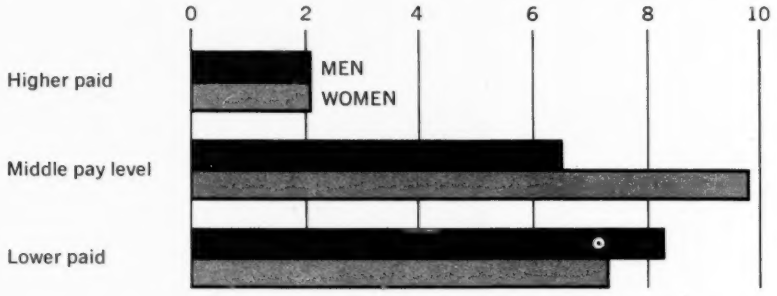


The usual earnings of black women in each occupation were generally lower than those of men.

*Number of women employed in this occupation is too small to be shown separately.
**Number of men employed in this occupation is too small to be shown separately.

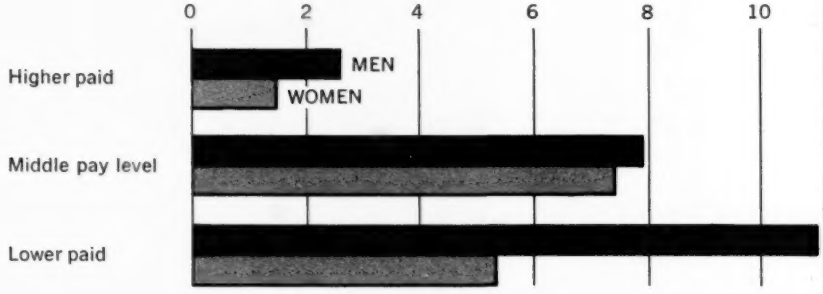
THE HIGHER-PAID OCCUPATIONS HAVE THE LOWEST UNEMPLOYMENT RATES . . .

Chart 2b.
1970 UNEMPLOYMENT RATE OF BLACK WORKERS



And black workers in the higher-paid occupations are rarely unemployed more than once in a single year.

Chart 2c.
PERCENT UNEMPLOYED MORE THAN ONCE IN 1970 OF ALL BLACK WORKERS

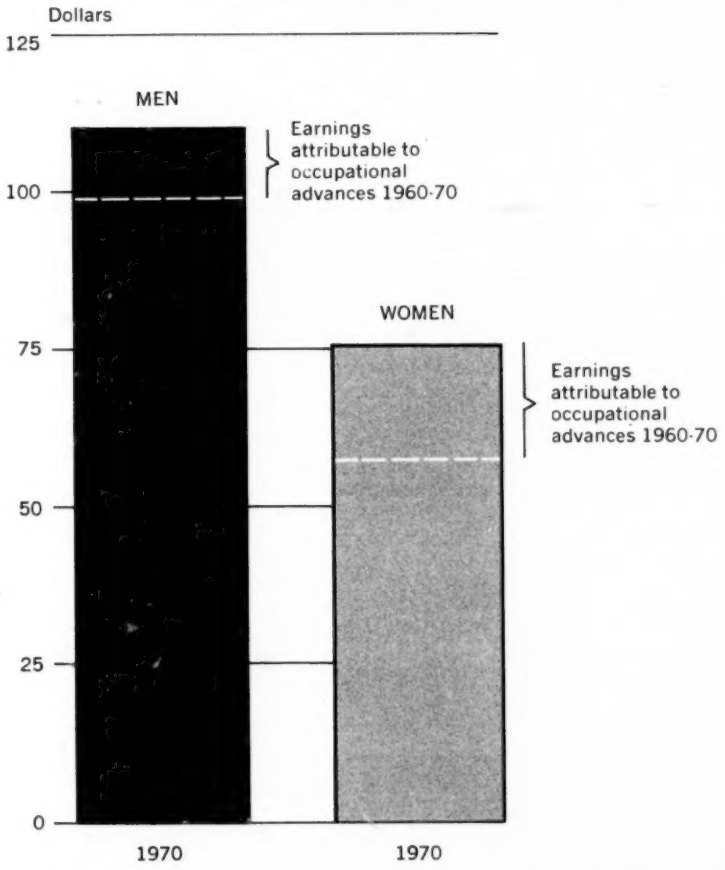


White men's unemployment rates are lower, but follow the same pattern. Women as well as men have the lowest unemployment rates in the higher-paid occupations.

OCCUPATIONAL CHANGE HAS LED TO HIGHER EARNINGS WITH LOWER UNEMPLOYMENT FOR BLACK WORKERS . . .

IN 1970, AVERAGE EARNINGS OF BLACK MEN WERE 11% HIGHER, AND OF BLACK WOMEN ABOUT 30% HIGHER THAN THEY WOULD HAVE BEEN IF THE BLACK LABOR FORCE HAD NOT BEEN MOVING INTO THE BETTER PAYING OCCUPATIONS . . .

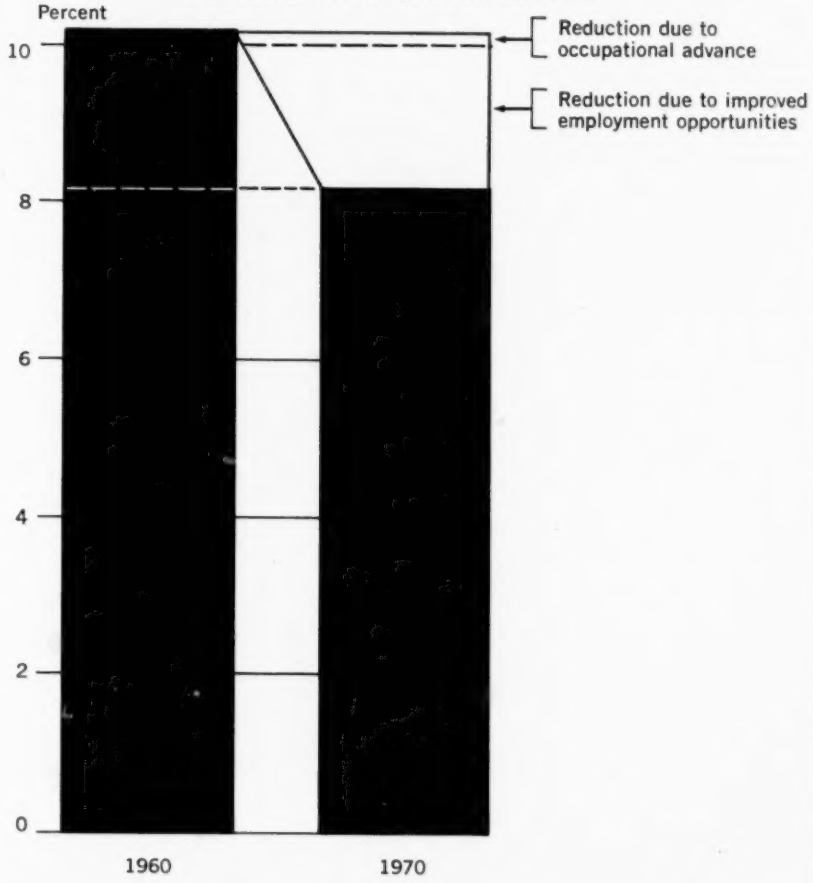
Chart 3a.
USUAL WEEKLY EARNINGS OF BLACK WORKERS (MEDIAN)



Similar occupational movement of white men contributed less than 3%, and of white women about 4% to 1970 earnings.

IN 1970, THE BLACK UNEMPLOYMENT RATE WAS 8.2% . . . COMPARED WITH OVER 10% IN 1960. PART OF THIS REDUCTION RESULTED FROM OCCUPATIONAL ADVANCEMENT — ESPECIALLY OF BLACK MEN.

Chart 3b.
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE OF BLACK WORKERS

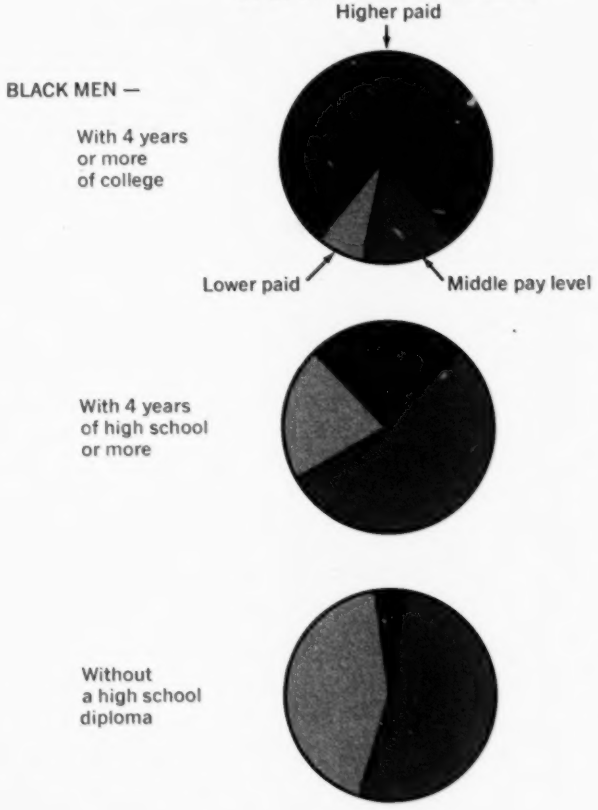


Occupational change had little or no effect on white unemployment rates.

OCCUPATIONAL ADVANCEMENT IS RELATED TO A BETTER PREPARED BLACK POPULATION . . .

BETTER EDUCATED BLACK WORKERS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO FILL HIGHER-PAID JOBS.

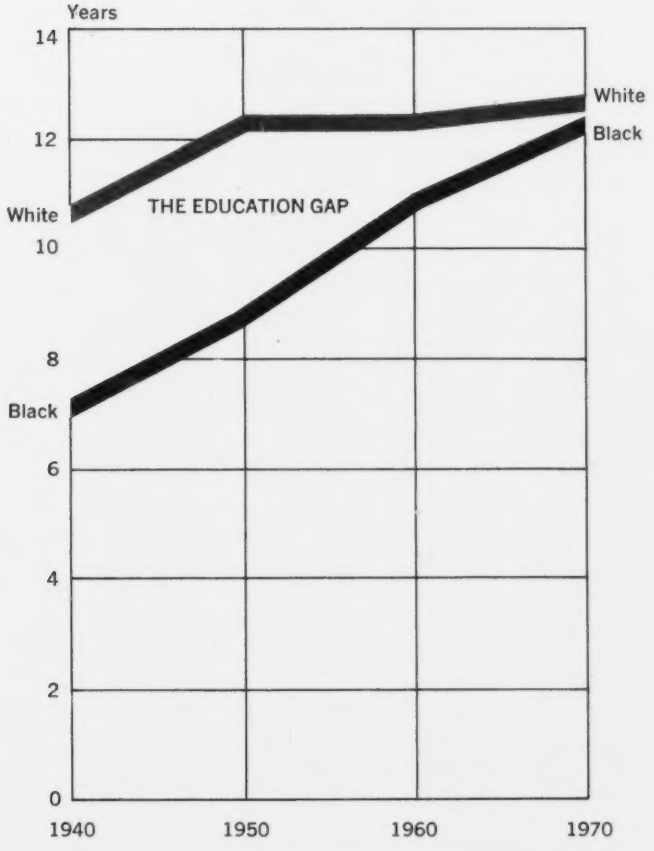
Chart 4a.
OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF BLACK MEN BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT


Higher paid
BLACK MEN —
With 4 years or more of college
Lower paid
Middle pay level
With 4 years of high school or more
Without a high school diploma

Higher educational attainment leads to higher occupational attainment for both men and women.

YOUNG BLACK ADULTS HAVE BEEN CLOSING THE EDUCATION GAP.

Chart 4b.
MEDIAN YEARS OF SCHOOL COMPLETED BY YOUNG ADULTS
(25-29 YEARS OLD)

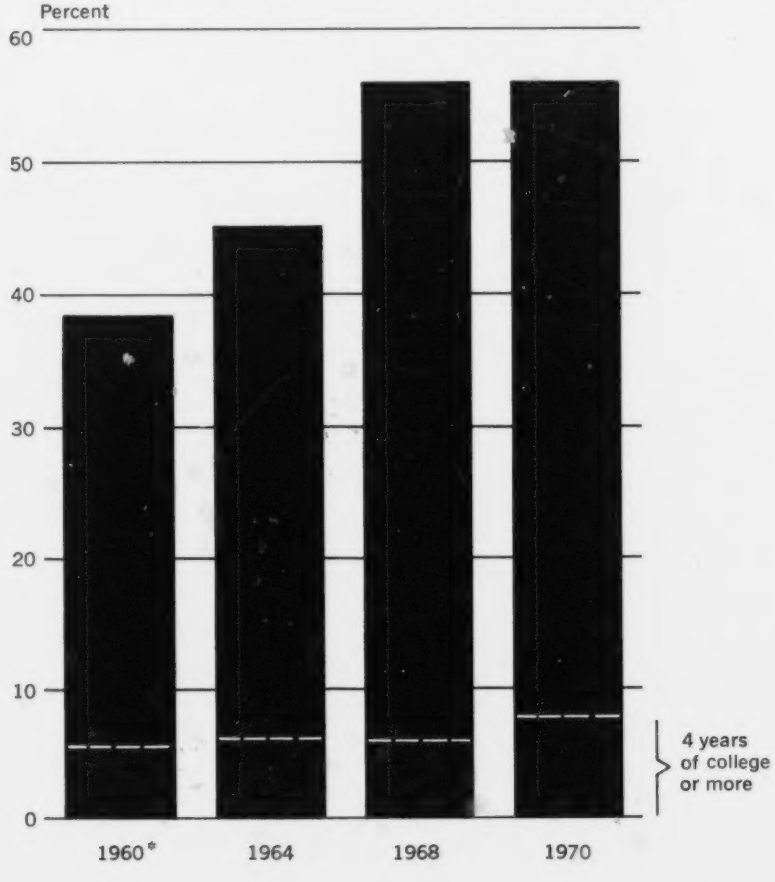


By 1970, educational attainment of young black adults was within one-half year of young white people this age. Lack of education is often a barrier to employment in better paid jobs for both black and white workers, whether education is required for performance of the job or not.

BLACK YOUTHS ARE STAYING IN SCHOOL LONGER AND MORE ARE GOING TO COLLEGE . . .

BY 1970, MORE THAN HALF OF THE YOUNG BLACK ADULTS HAD FOUR YEARS OF HIGH SCHOOL OR MORE . . .

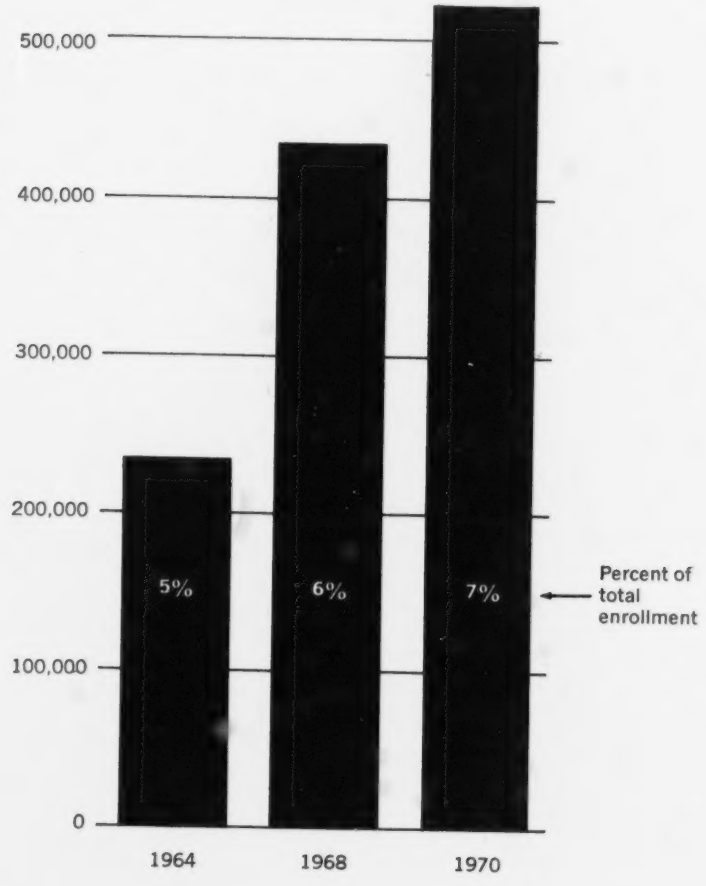
Chart 5a.
PERCENT OF BLACK POPULATION AGES 25-29 WHO HAD COMPLETED 4 YEARS OF HIGH SCHOOL OR MORE, AND 4 YEARS OF COLLEGE



*Data refer to Negro and other races.

. . . AND COLLEGE ENROLLMENTS INCREASED SHARPLY.

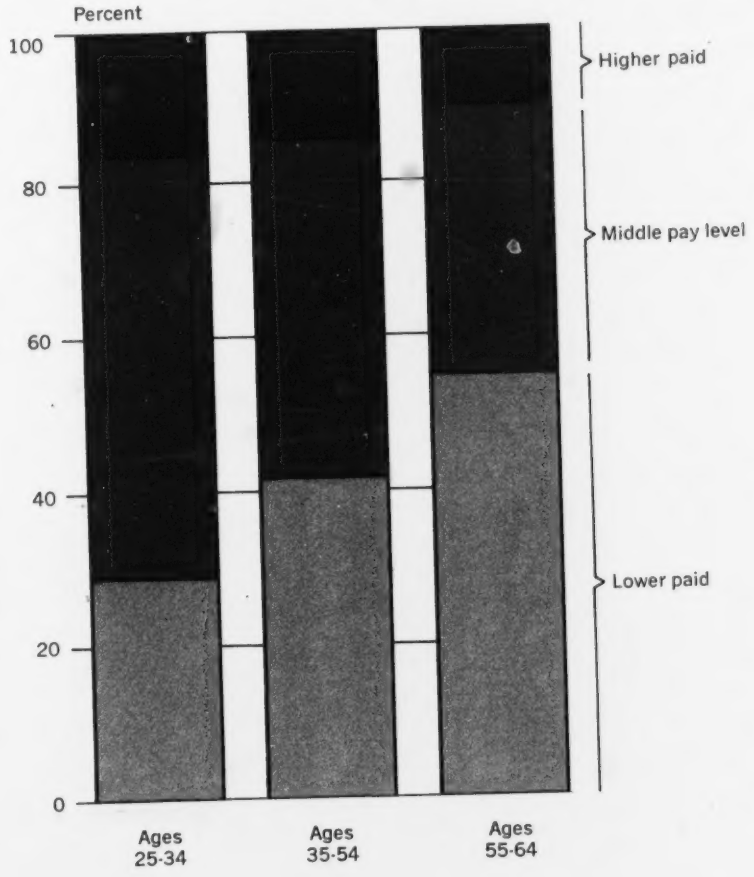
Chart 5b.
NUMBER OF BLACK YOUTH ENROLLED IN COLLEGE



THE EFFECT OF EDUCATIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL ADVANCE IS MOST APPARENT AMONG YOUNG BLACK WORKERS . . .

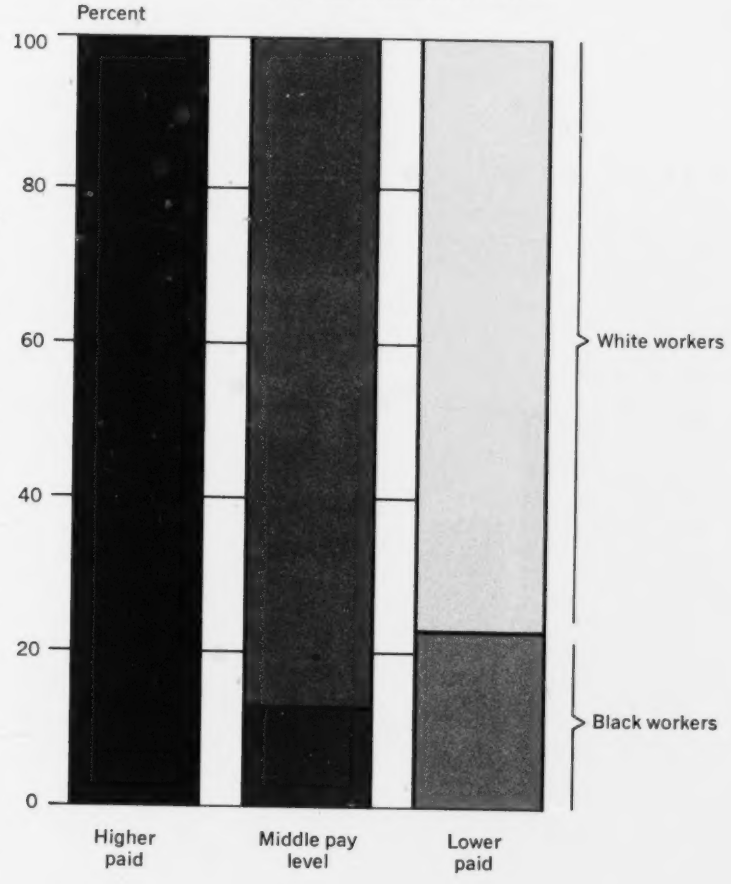
YOUNGER BLACK WORKERS ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE IN HIGHER PAID OCCUPATIONS THAN ARE OLDER AGE GROUPS . . .

Chart 6a.
OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF BLACK WORKERS BY AGE



HOWEVER, DESPITE GAINS MADE BY THE YOUNG, MANY ARE STILL IN THE LOWEST PAID OCCUPATIONS.

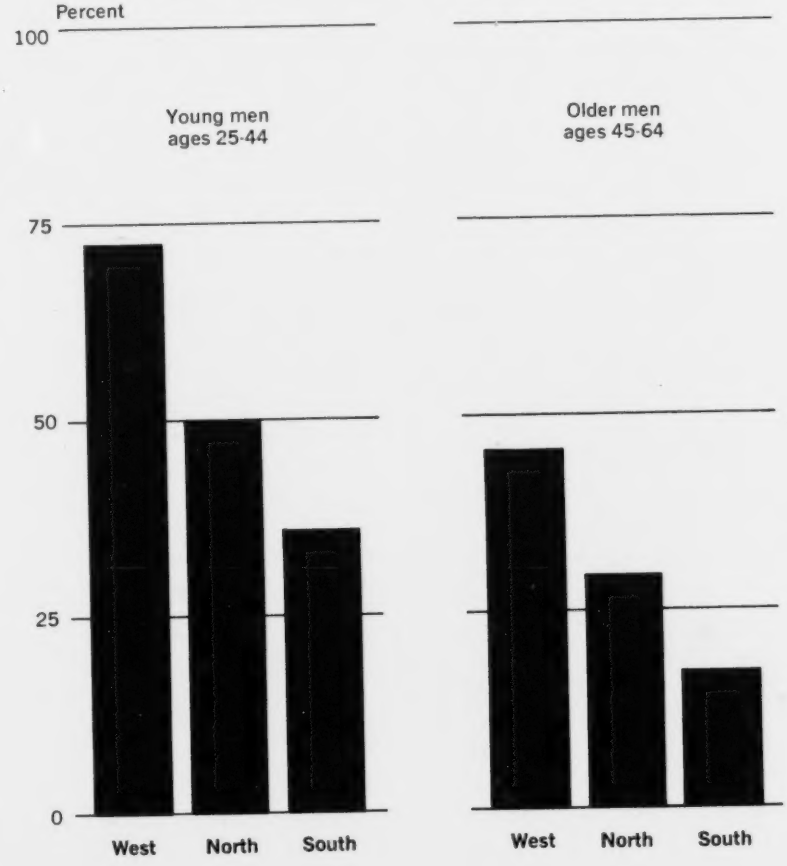
Chart 6b.
BLACK WORKERS AS A PERCENT OF YOUNG WORKERS AGES 25-34, BY OCCUPATIONAL PAY LEVEL



EDUCATIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF BLACK WORKERS, BOTH YOUNG AND OLD, HAVE BEEN HIGHER IN THE WEST AND NORTH THAN IN THE SOUTH*

NEARLY THREE-QUARTERS OF THE YOUNG BLACK MEN IN THE WEST, AND ONE-HALF OF THOSE IN THE NORTH HAD FINISHED FOUR YEARS OF HIGH SCHOOL OR MORE BY 1970, COMPARED WITH JUST OVER ONE-THIRD IN THE SOUTH . . .

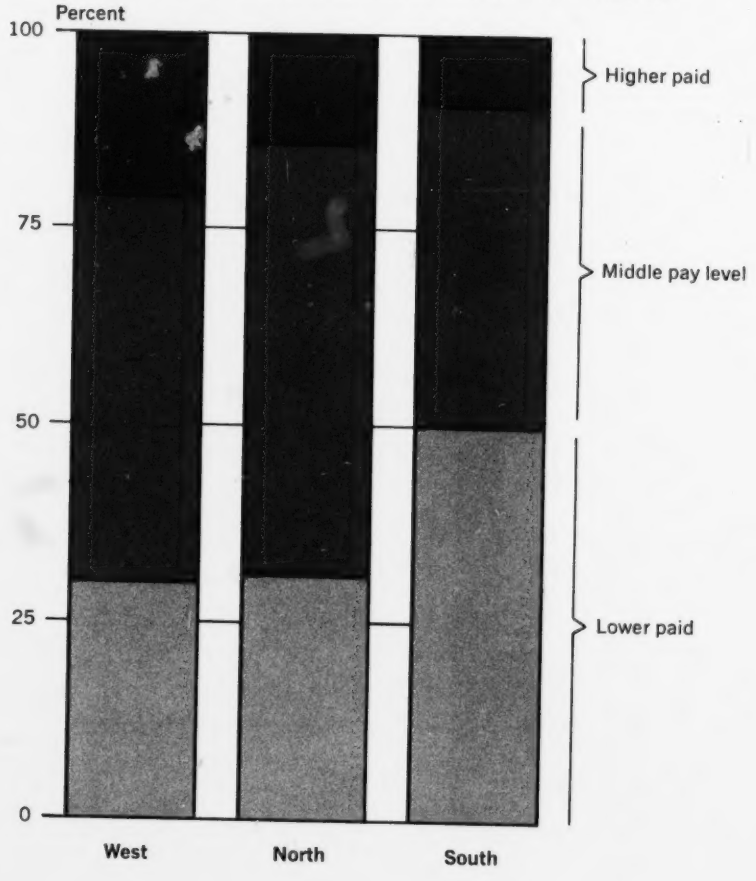
Chart 7a.
PERCENT OF BLACK WORKERS WITH 4 YEARS OF HIGH SCHOOL OR MORE



*North is composed of Northeast and North Central regions.

TWO-THIRDS OF THE BLACK WORKERS IN THE WEST AND NORTH ARE IN THE HIGHER OR MIDDLE PAY LEVEL OCCUPATIONS, COMPARED WITH ONE-HALF OF THE BLACK WORKERS IN THE SOUTH.

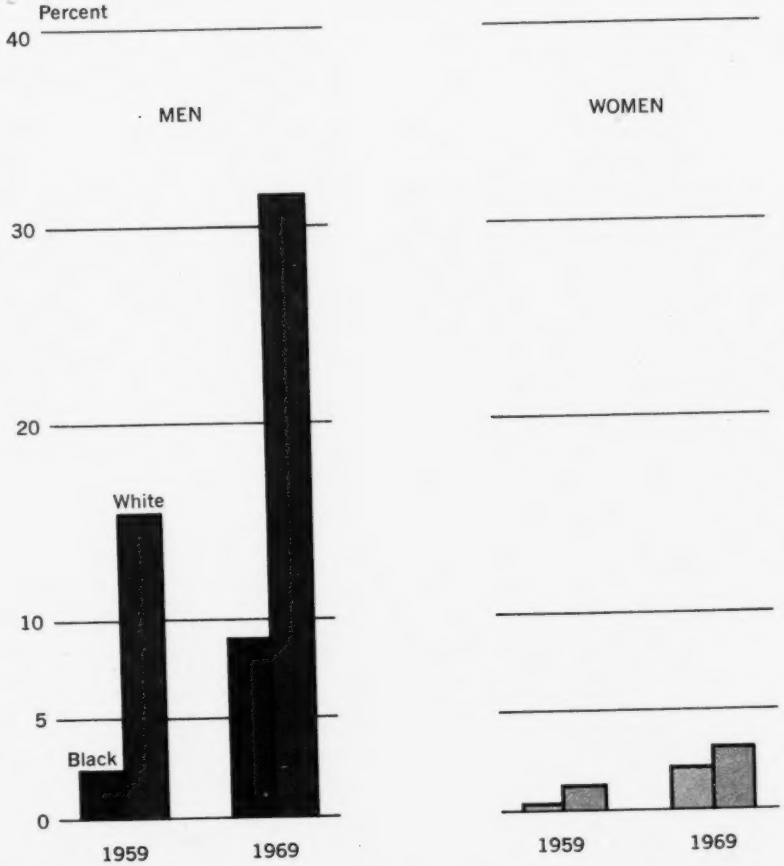
Chart 7b.
OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF BLACK MEN BY REGION



AS A RESULT OF WIDER JOB CHOICES, AND INCREASED JOB SECURITY, INCOMES OF BLACK WORKERS HAVE INCREASED . . .

THE PROPORTION OF BLACK MEN WITH OVER $10,000 EARNINGS* QUADRUPLED BETWEEN 1959 AND 1969 . . . BUT WAS STILL FAR BELOW THAT OF WHITE MEN.

Chart 8a.
PERCENT WITH EARNINGS OF $10,000 OR MORE IN CONSTANT DOLLARS*

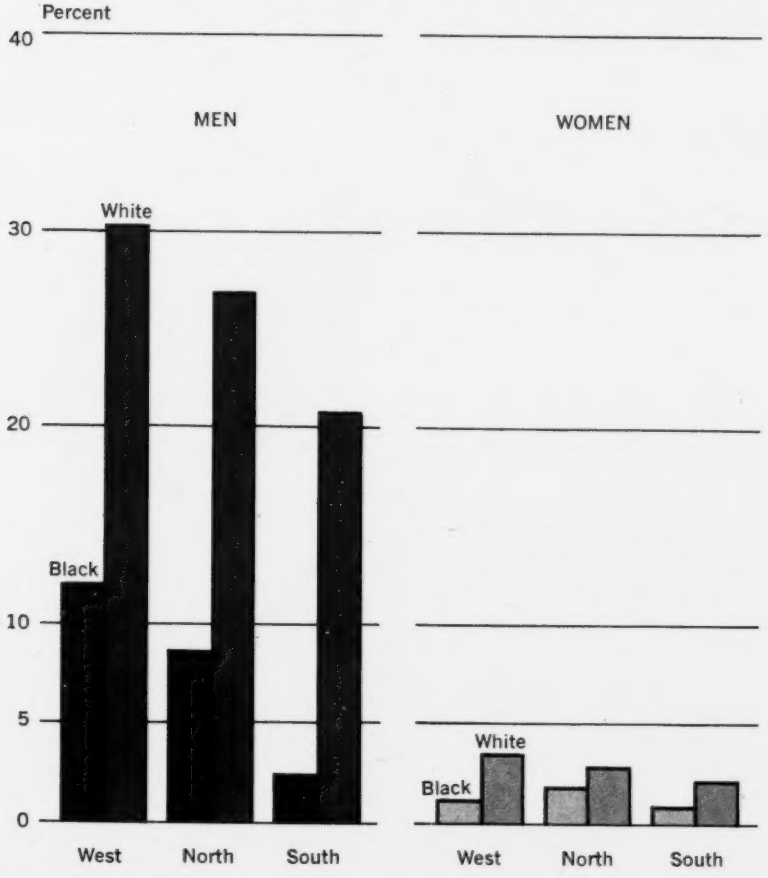


Black and white women lagged behind both black and white men in achieving such earnings, despite gains during the decade.

* In Constant 1969 dollars. Data for black men and women refer to Negro and other races.

THE PERCENT WITH INCOME OF $10,000 OR MORE WAS MUCH LARGER IN THE WEST AND THE NORTH THAN IN THE SOUTH FOR BOTH BLACK AND WHITE MEN.

Chart 8b.
PERCENT OF PERSONS WITH INCOMES OF $10,000 OR MORE IN 1969*



However, few women earn such incomes in any region.

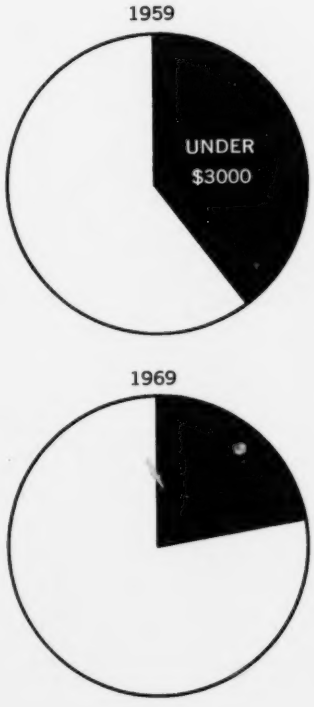
*Data for black men and women refer to Negroes, only.

THE IMPROVEMENT IN BLACK WORKERS' JOBS AND SECURITY HAS REDUCED, BUT NOT ELIMINATED, LOW EARNERS IN THE NONFARM LABOR FORCE . . .

THERE WAS A SHARP REDUCTION BETWEEN 1959 AND 1969 IN THE PERCENT OF BLACK MEN AND BLACK WOMEN WITH EARNINGS UNDER $3,000*.

Chart 9a

BLACK MEN



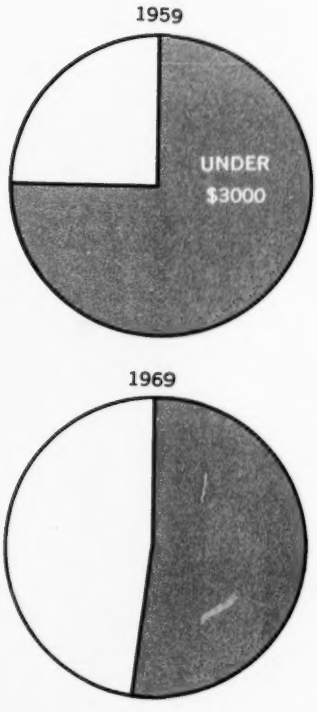
Less than 15% of white men were earning at this level compared with over 20% of black men, in 1969.

*Annual earnings in constant 1969 dollars.

BUT MORE THAN HALF OF ALL BLACK WOMEN STILL HAD SUCH EARNINGS IN 1969 . . .

Chart 9b

BLACK WOMEN



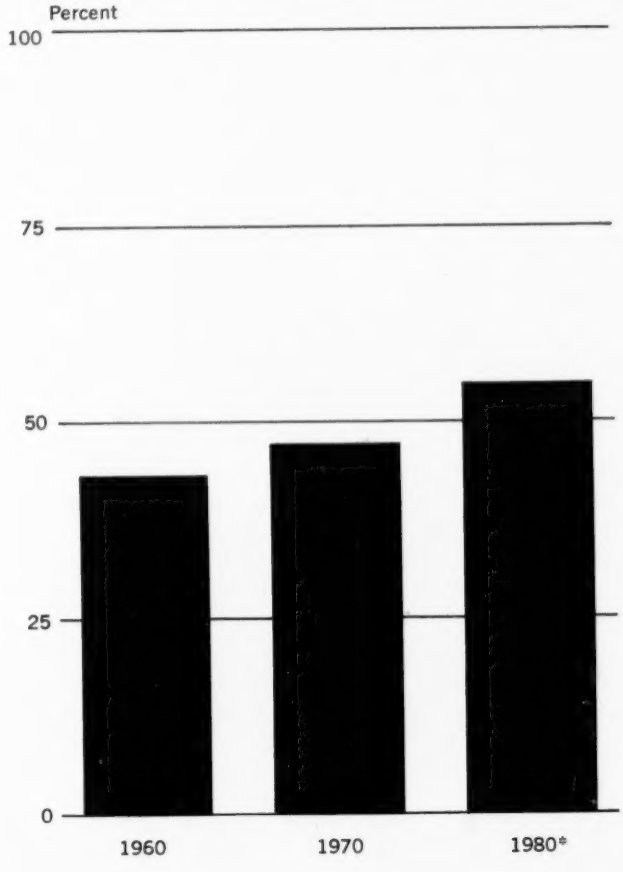
Two-fifths of white women were earning at this level in 1969.

*Annual earnings in constant 1969 dollars.

THE FUTURE
HOLDS
GREAT PROMISE . . .

BY 1980, A MUCH LARGER SHARE OF THE BLACK LABOR FORCE WILL BE YOUNG . . .

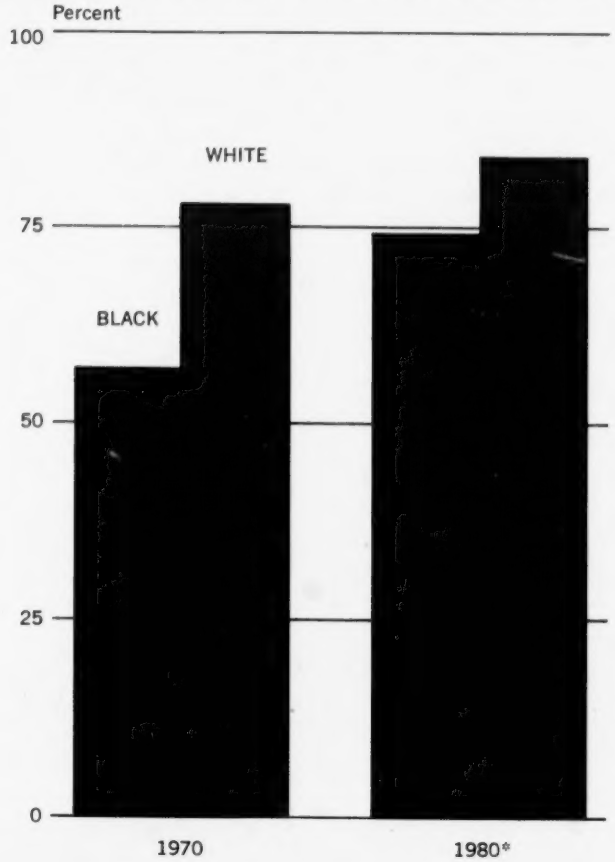
Chart 10a.
PERCENT OF BLACK LABOR FORCE UNDER 35 YEARS OF AGE



*Projection — Total labor force.

. . . AND BETTER EDUCATED.

Chart 10b.
PERCENT HAVING 4 YEARS OF HIGH SCHOOL OR MORE, AGES 25-34



As a result, a larger proportion of black workers is expected to be in the better paid occupations.

* Projection — Civilian labor force.

APPENDIX TABLES

Charts 1-a&b. Change in employment by occupation and race 1960-70 (numbers in millions)

Race and occupation level	1960	1970	Percent change 1960-70	Percent of total 1970 employment
Negro and other races				
All occupations	6.9	8.4	22	100
Higher paid	.5	1.1	109	13
Middle pay level	2.4	4.0	64	47
Lower paid	4.0	3.4	—15	40
White				
All occupations	58.9	70.2	19	100
Higher paid	14.0	18.4	31	26
Middle pay level	32.1	38.6	21	55
Lower paid	12.8	13.2	3	19

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employment and Earnings*, December 1969 and January 1971.

Chart 2-a. Usual weekly earnings by occupation, median for full-time workers, Negro and other races, May 1970

Occupation		Male	Female
Total		$114	$ 82
Higher paid	— Professional and technical	174	146
	Managers, officials, and proprietors	169	[1]
Middle pay level	— Clerical	123	98
	Sales workers	125	71
	Craftsmen and foremen	129	[1]
	Operatives	112	75
Lower pay scale	— Nonfarm laborers	98	[1]
	Private household	[1]	42
	Service workers	95	72
	Farmers and farm laborers	55	[1]

[1] Data base below 40,000 — too small to show separately.
Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of The Census, *Current Population Survey*, May 1970.

Chart 2-b. Unemployment rates of Negro and other races, males and females — 1970

Occupation level	Males	Females
Higher paid	2.1	2.1
Middle pay level	6.5	9.8
Lower paid	8.3	7.3

Source: *Current Population Survey*, annual averages, 1970.

Chart 2-c. Percent of workers with two or more spells of unemployment, Negro and other races, by occupation of longest job, 1970

Occupation level	Total	Male	Female
Higher paid	2.1	2.6	1.5
Middle pay level	7.7	7.9	7.4
Lower paid	8.1	11.0	5.3

Source: *Current Population Survey*, work experience tabulations, March 1971

Chart 3-a. 1970 weekly earnings weighted by 1960 employment distribution compared with 1970 earnings weighted by 1970 employment distribution

Race	Using 1970 weights	Using 1960 weights	Difference Amount	Difference Percent
Negro and other				
Men	$110.34	$ 99.57	$10.77	10.8
Women	75.13	57.56	17.57	30.5
White				
Men	155.77	152.44	3.33	2.2
Women	85.72	82.12	3.60	4.4

Source: *Current Population Survey*, annual averages 1970, and May 1970.

Chart 3-b. 1960 and 1970 unemployment rate Negro and other races, both sexes

	Actual unemployment rate of: Total labor force	Actual unemployment rate of: Experienced labor force	Computed unemployment rate of experienced labor force
Actual 1960 Rate	10.2	9.3	
Actual 1970 Rate	8.2	7.1	
Change: 1960-70		−2.2	
Computed Unemployment Rate			
1960 Labor Force Distribution x 1960 Unemployment Rates			9.3
1970 Labor Force Distribution x 1960 Unemployment Rates			9.0
Change because of occupational advance, 1960-70			−0.3

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employment and Earnings*, December 1969 and January 1971 and *Current Population Survey*, annual averages, 1970.

Chart 4-a. Distribution of employed men by occupation and educational attainment (18 years of age and over)

Race and occupation level	Less than 4 years of high school (percent)	4 years high school or more (percent)	4 years college or more (percent)
Negro and other	100	100	100
Higher paid	4	24	78
Middle level	53	55	15
Lower paid	42	21	6
White	100	100	100
Higher paid	11	42	83
Middle level	64	48	15
Lower paid	25	11	2

Source: *Current Population Survey*, March 1970, educational attainment tabulations.

Chart 4-b. Median years of school completed by persons 25-29 years old

	Negro and other races	White
1940	7.1	10.9
1950	8.7	12.2
1960	10.8[1]	12.3
1970	12.2	12.6

[1] Total population, not total civilian population as in other years.
Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, No. 77, 99, 194, and 207, and *Census of Population 1960*, PC(2)-5B, table 2.

Chart 5-a. Percent of population ages 25-29 with 4 years of high school or more, and 4 years of college or more

	4 years high school or more		4 years college or more	
Year	Negro	White	Negro	White
1960	38.6[1]	63.7	5.4[1]	11.8
1964	45.1	72.1	5.6	13.6
1968	55.9	75.2	5.4	15.6
1970	56.1	77.8	7.3	17.2

[1] Negro and other races
Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, Numbers 138, 182, 194, and 207.

Chart 5-b. Negroes enrolled in college

Year	Number	Percent of total enrollments
1964	234,000	5
1968	434,000	6
1970	522,000	7

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, No. 190, and P-20, No. 148.

Chart 6-a. Distribution of occupations by age and race, 1970

	Negro and other races		
	25-34 yrs.	35-54 yrs.	55-64 yrs.
Higher paid	16	15	10
Middle level	55	44	35
Lower paid	29	42	55
	White		
Higher paid	31	29	27
Middle level	55	56	52
Lower paid	13	15	21

Source: *Current Population Survey*, annual averages, 1970.

Chart 6-b. Percent Negro and other races of total employment by age and occupation, 1970

Occupation level	25-34 years of age	35-54 years of age	55-64 years of age
Total	12	11	9
Higher paid	6	6	4
Middle level	12	9	6
Lower paid	23	25	21

Source: *Current Population Survey*, annual averages, 1970.

Chart 7-a. Percent of Negro men with 4 years of high school or more, 1970, by region

Region	Younger men Ages 25-44	Older men Ages 45-64
West	72.4	45.6
North	50.0	29.5
South	36.0	17.3

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, No. 207.

Chart 7-b. Occupational distribution of employed persons by region, 1970

Occupation level	North	West	South
Negro and other			
Higher paid	14	21	9
Middle level	55	49	41
Lower paid	31	30	50
White			
Higher paid	25	29	27
Middle level	56	51	56
Lower paid	19	20	18

Source: *Current Population Survey*, 1970 special area annual averages.

Chart 8-a. Percent of persons employed in nonfarm occupations, with earnings of $10,000 or more; 1959 and 1969[1]

Sex and race	1959	1969
Males		
Negro and other races	2.3	8.9
White	15.5	31.7
Females		
Negro and other races	0.2	2.1
White	1.3	3.1

[1] In constant 1969 dollars.
Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Survey*.

Chart 8-b. Percent of workers with incomes of $10,000 or more in 1969, by sex and race

Region	Negro and other races				White	
	Men		Women			
	Total	Negro	Total	Negro	Men	Women
Total	6.8	5.5	1.3	1.2	26.1	2.6
North	9.4	8.7	1.7	1.7	27.5	2.6
South	2.6	2.3	0.9	0.9	20.9	2.1
West	15.4	12.2	2.1	1.1	30.2	3.4

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Survey.*

Chart 9-a&b. Percent of persons employed in nonfarm occupations with earnings under $3,000[1] in 1959 and 1969

Sex and race	1959	1969
Men	18.0	14.6
White	15.9	14.0
Negro and other races	39.5	22.1
Women	51.9	43.3
White	48.6	42.0
Negro and other races	75.3	52.0

[1] In constant 1969 dollars.
Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Survey.*

Chart 10-a. Distribution of the total labor force by age, 1960, 1970, and 1980[1]

Race and age	1960	1970	1980[1]
Negro and other	100	100	100
Under 35 years of age	42	48	55
35 years and over	58	52	45
White	100	100	100
Under 35 years of age	38	43	48
35 years and over	62	57	52

[1] Projection
Source: Travis, Sophia C. *The U.S. Labor Force Projections to 1985,* Special Labor Force Report No. 119, and U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employment and Earnings,* January 1972.

Chart 10-b. Percent with 4 years of high school or more in the civilian labor force, ages 25-34, 1970 and 1980

	Negro and other	White
1970	59	78
1980[1]	74	84

[1] Projection
Source: Johnston, Dennis, *Education of Adult Workers,* Special Labor Force Report No. 122, and William Deutermann, *Educational Attainment of Workers, March 1969 and 1970,* Special Labor Force Report No. 125.

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